



November 9, 2009

The Honorable Sherrod Brown
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Brown:

Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) is pleased to support the Benefit Rating Acceleration for Veteran Entitlements (BRAVE) Act. PVA is the only Congressionally-chartered veterans' service organization dedicated solely for the benefit and representation of veterans with spinal cord injury or disease.

The BRAVE Act breaks down the bureaucratic silos that veterans and their families face by allowing veterans with 100% service-connected disabilities to be found automatically eligible for Social Security disability benefits. The VA annually rates nearly 8,000 veterans as 100 percent disabled. However, the Veterans Disability Benefits Commission reported that only 54% of veterans rated 100% by the VA are receiving SSDI. While it is true that many of these veterans may be working and thus ineligible for Social Security disability, the VDBC concluded "either these veterans do not know to apply for SSDI or they are being denied the insurance."

The Defense Department (DOD) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) have been working on streamlining the disability claims process between their two systems for several years. However, veterans with disabilities severe enough to qualify for Social Security disability still have to go through the entire, lengthy SSDI application process even when they've already been adjudicated for DOD and VA disability.

This legislation would ensure that veterans with disabilities receive all the support they are owed without forcing them and their loved ones to endure redundant applications and unnecessary delays. Moreover, this bill will lessen the administrative burden on SSA at a time when that agency is struggling to handle an increasing workload with limited financial resources.

PVA looks forward to working with you on this legislation.

Sincerely,



Homer S. Townsend, Jr.
Executive Director

BRAVEAct111thPVAltr

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